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# Not Dead At All

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# Not Dead At All

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A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Communication

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Masters of Arts in Professional Communication

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by

Martin Becerra

May 2014

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Shara Lange -Chair Committee

Carrie Oliveira

Bobby Funk

Sitcom, Media Production, Humour, Likeability, Television

ABSTRACT

Not Dead At All

by

Martin Becerra

*Not Dead At All* is a nontraditional thesis, a creative product, the result of a combination of media production and social research. This paper is an attempt to explain the creative and production process behind the creation of an original media content, using the social research as a tool to increase the likeability of our characters and therefore increase the show's chances of success.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

For my thesis project I tried to do something that has not been done before, which is to apply the social research into a creative process. My project is a nontraditional thesis, a creative product, the result of a combination of media production and social research. Within all the media content available to the consumers I have always enjoyed the sitcoms and have always been amazed by the characters you can find in this genre; therefore, I decided to study about sitcom characters and to create an original sitcom.

The word Sitcom is an abbreviation for situation comedy and it is a TV genre that usually consist of the reactions of a regular cast of characters to unusual situations, such as misunderstandings or embarrassing coincidences; these characters typically share the same common environment. The key to the contemporary, modern sitcoms on television is that the characters stay in the same situation from episode to episode; events of individual episodes typically resolve themselves by the end and are rarely mentioned in subsequent episodes. The humor in situation comedies varies and it is generally character-driven (Austerlitz, 2014). Knowing this, I felt that it was essential for me to study about sitcoms characters because they would be the leaders of my show.

Not Dead At All is a modern sitcom that, nonetheless, respects the standard rules of the classic sitcoms. The episodes are 20 minutes long and the actions take places almost entirely in the same place. Moreover, the story lines resolve themselves at the end of the show, giving the episodes a plot independence, which is fundamental in this genre. The characters have strong personalities that remain largely static. However, in contrast to classic sitcoms, the relationship between characters do evolve: at the same time we are discovering their personalities, weaknesses and strengths, fears and ambitions; the characters start getting to know each other, make new friendships, develop feelings of love, respect, hatred…

Another differentiating element of this sitcom is that it takes into account the new demography in the USA. According to the 2013 census, the Hispanics constitute 17 % of the country's total population and by 2060 there will be 132.8 million of Hispanics (Hispanic Heritage Month, 2013). Some other shows are starting to use some Spanish characters and Spanish plots during their episodes. One example of this trend is Breaking Bad, the AMC hit, which used characters talking in Spanish during the entire show. In my original sitcom I try to

combine both cultures. Two of the main characters are Latinos and during the first season they will have parallel conversation in Spanish and plots where their Hispanic culture will create a conflict.

This paper is an attempt to explain the creative and production process behind the creation of an original media content, using the social research as a tool to increase the likeability of our characters and therefore increase the show's chances of success.

# CHAPTER 2

# RESEARCH

During the spring semester of 2013 I conducted a research about sitcom characters and likeability. Katz and his colleagues (1973) explained using the uses and gratifications approach that the audience is not a passive subject; they claim that people actively seek out specific media and specific content to generate specific gratifications, or results. Once a viewer has selected a particular genre, such as the sitcom, the consumer will confront the same problem again, which is choosing between one or the other. The disposition-based theories predicted that the enjoyment of the consumers grew when highly liked characters experienced positive outcomes (Raney, 2006). Media producers are interested in creating likeable characters that will make people want to consume their products, characters such as Charlie Harper, Sheldon Cooper, or Joey Tribbiani. Having as references three of the most recent and classic sitcoms, I realized that my favorite characters were social deviants, and by that I mean that all of them were characters that do not follow social rules. I wanted to understand how these social deviant characters can be likeable and why are they so popular.

The participants in the study were students from ETSU. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling, using any subjects that were available to participate in the research. Because the research was focused on humor and likeability perception, which are not limited by age or level of education, using convenience sampling would not limit the ability to generalize to a broader population. The only requirement for being a part of the sample was to be a viewer of at least one of the following sitcoms: Two And A Half Men, The Big Bang Theory, or Friends. Two types of surveys were used; face-to face surveys and online surveys. All the surveys were identical, regardless of the medium used (online and face-to-face). The total number of surveys completed was 150; one hundred of them were face-to-face surveys, the others 50 were online surveys (see Figure 1). The participants completed surveys about different characters of three popular sitcoms: Two and A Half Men, The Big Bang Theory, and Friends. The data collected in the study indicated a strong correlation between humorous characters and likeable characters. A correlation test was used to study the relationship between likeability and humor. Hypothesis 1 predicted that humor would be positively correlated with likeability, and the data were consistent with the hypothesis ($r(150)=.62$, $p<.001$). The analysis of the data showed that humor and likeability were strongly related, and whether the character was socially deviant or socially appropriate that relation still held true. The study also showed that contrary to what people could think about socially deviant characters, they could be made likeable through humor. These findings had

implications on the characters process making.

The goal of all screenplay writers and show runners should be to build likeable characters because the viewers enjoy more the shows when good things happen to likeable characters. In order to make the character more likeable, they will need to create the characters more humorous. The incongruity theory states that humor starts when there is an incongruity between the expectations and the reality (Cooper, 2008); knowing that social deviant characters can break regular social conduct rules, creating an incongruity, it is a good choice to incorporate some social deviant characters in the cast. It is important to create an equilibrium between characters because in a cast with just social deviant characters the viewers will remove the state of expectancy and there will be no possible contradictions. Humor is also related to what happens to the characters. For example, the misfortune of others gives pleasure to the spectator, as a result of a social comparison and the feeling of superiority (Rowe & Regehr, 2010). As a conclusion of this research, I realized that in my sitcom the equilibrium between social deviant and appropriate social characters is needed; there will be characters that will create the conflict and others that will suffer the consequences.

Figure 1. Online Survey

# CHAPTER 3

## CREATIVE PROCESS

During the spring and summer semesters of 2013 I worked on the creation of the sitcom and the script for the first episode. I had some previous experience in writing scripts, but they were all short films, not sitcom scripts, and for this project I not only needed to write a script but also to create the entire show, the characters, locations, and plots for the first season. I used the summer to read as much as possible about this genre and I found some books that I would recommend to any one who is interested in creating a sitcom: “Writing Television Sitcoms”, “The Sitcom Career Book”, “How To Write For Animation” and “Elephant Bucks: An Insider’s Guide to Writing for TV Sitcoms” (see Figure 2). In the end, all these books show you how to structure the script, how to follow the rules of the industry, and some of them even provide you with plot templates to develop your story; however, none of them teach you the most important thing in a sitcom--how to create your characters.

In order to build the main plot of the show and to create my characters I used the findings of my research and combined it with the tips from the books I read. One of the main rules of humor is the surprise effect, and that is why I chose to locate my sitcom inside a hospital. There are several TV shows about hospitals but not a lot of comedies. To bring comedy inside a hospital will allow me to continuously surprise my viewers.

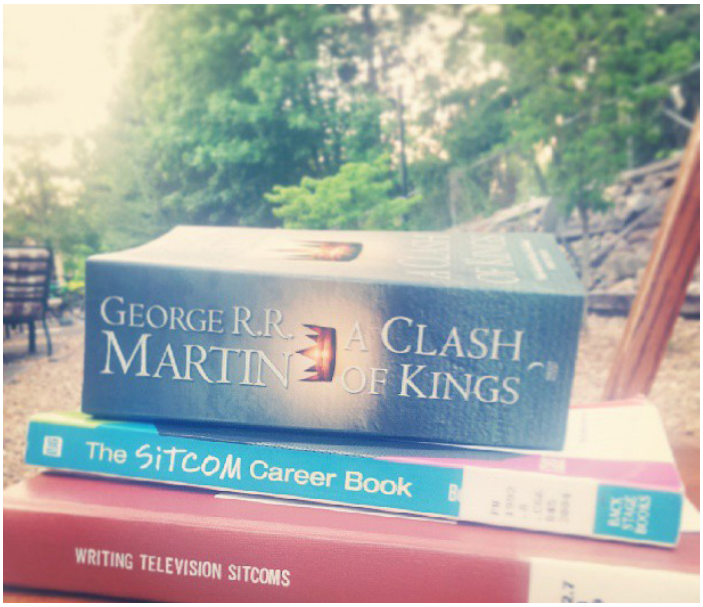


Figure 2. Bibliography Reference

In my research I found that the balance between social deviant characters and appropriate social characters will help me to build comic situations. That is why I decided to create my two main characters as social deviants, and I used the relief and incongruity theory to shape them. Freud stated in his relief theory that some situations are humorous not because of the action but because when we watch they produce a release of our unconscious desires and produces a satisfaction in us (as cited in Sen, 2012). That is why Gustavo Salazar is a rich man, a bon vivant who spend his days on luxury yachts, eating caviar and smoking cigars, surrounded by alcohol and sexy women. He is egocentric, immature, spoiled, and cowardly. Why should we like him? Well, the answer is simple, we all would like to live like him, with no preoccupations about money and responsibilities, being able to enjoy every moment of our lives.

The incongruity theory said that "in order to create humor there has to be an incongruity between our expectations and what really happens; therefore, there will be surprise and humor" (Cooper, 2008, p.1096). My other main character is Dr. Benjamin Schmidt; and what is the biggest incongruity you could find in a doctor? The answer is simple again, the doctor is a hypochondriac. Dr. Schmidt is one of the top 10 doctors in the country, but he did not become a doctor in order to cure people but to cure himself. Convinced that he is surrounded by viruses and bacteria, he found out that the best way to be safe is to be a doctor and work in a hospital, where he can have access to all kinds of medicines and treatments. But every power comes with responsibilities and in his case he is forced to treat sick people.

The main idea of the show is to have the rich selfish patient pretending to be in a coma and the crazy doctor using this patient to get free treatments. The rest of the cast and all the patients and workers of the hospital will suffer the egocentricity of our protagonist every day. After having the main characters and the idea of the show, I started working on the first episode, using the templates and tips from the books I read. This process is longer that you might think because you need to write, read it, correct it, read it again, and get some feedback from at least four different people. After having rewritten the script several times, I finally had the final one, and I was ready to start the next step of the process, the preproduction.

CHAPTER 4

# PREPRODUCTION

The preproduction process is one of the most, if not the most important part of every media production. In this process you will set up your production plan and if it is thorough and rigorous and implemented correctly in the production process, it will ensure that your film will never look different from your original idea of the project. During this process you need to cover the following things:

Assembling a crew: one of the most important things in a film production is to have a good crew, as it is impossible to make a movie on your own. I always wanted to pick my crew members from ETSU, and I did: all my crew were ETSU students. By doing so, I was also teaching and mentoring some undergrad students, exposing them to a professional film shooting environment and giving them the opportunity to use my project and count it as laboratory hours for their programs. I designed some posters (see Figure 3) and placed them all over the campus. Some of the roles in my crew were: Director of photography (DOP), Assistant Director (AD), Camera men, Sound Director, Executive Producer, Producer, Hair and Make-Up, Costume Designer, Production Assistant, etc.

Preproduction Calendar: is the moment when you sit down and create deadlines for each process. Choose the date for shooting and start going backwards to determine when to have things done. In a project like this it was important to be fair and not cheat. I created the deadlines myself and I did not skip any of them.

Figure 3. Flyer

Production Breakdown: one of the first things I did was get together with my executive producer and do the script breakdown, which consisted of an analysis of the screenplay in which all of the production elements were reduced to lists in order to schedule and budget the production (see Figures 4 & 5).

**BREAKDOWN SHEET** #__Not Dead At All____

Page Count:__11,12_____ Date:_____

Production Company:_____

Production Title: The last judgment

Scene #:6 _Scene Name: ambulance 1 INT/EXT:Int DAY/NIGHT:day

Description:_____

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **CAST**<br>Carrie<br>Paramedic<br>Gus | **STUNTS** | **EXTRAS/ATMOSPHERE** |
| | **EXTRAS/SILENT** | |
| **SPECIAL EFFECTS** | **PROPS** | **VEHICLES/ANIMALS** |
| **WARDROBE**<br>Gus: same trial<br>Carrie: same trial<br>Paramedic uniform | **MAKEUP/HAIR** | **SOUND EFFECTS/MUSIC**<br>Ambulance noise driving<br>Street<br>Car braking<br>Electroshock |
| **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT** | **PRODUCTION NOTES**<br>Find a paramedic (actor)<br>Driver? | |

**BREAKDOWN SHEET** #__Not Dead At All____

Page Count:__4-9_____ Date:_____

Production Company:_____

Production Title: The last judgment

Scene #:4 _Scene Name: Trial INT/EXT:Int DAY/NIGHT:day

Description:_____

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **CAST**<br>Lenny<br>Gus<br>Judge<br>Carrie<br>Lawyer | **STUNTS**<br>Pocket bottle<br>Cocaine<br>3 suit case<br>tissue<br>coffee flask | **EXTRAS/ATMOSPHERE** |
| | **EXTRAS/SILENT**<br>2 people | |
| **SPECIAL EFFECTS**<br>cocaine | **PROPS** | **VEHICLES/ANIMALS** |
| **WARDROBE**<br>Suit (lenny)<br>Shirt and jacket<br>Sun glasses<br>Judge gown<br>Lawyer suit<br>Dress carrie | **MAKEUP/HAIR**<br>Puffy eyes | **SOUND EFFECTS/MUSIC** |
| **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT** | **PRODUCTION NOTES**<br>Do research about court rooms | |

Figures 4 and 5. Breakdown Sheets

Prop and wardrobe identification and preparation: because my sitcoms take place in a hospital, some of my actors had to wear scrubs, and I had to buy them in advance and have some extras one. After a meeting with my costume designer I also started designing some props, like hospital identification cards and hospital paper work templates. I also bought some breakaway props in advance to have them ready for the day of the shooting (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Props

Special effects identification and preparation: in this process I met with my hair and makeup director and discussed the special make up needed, such as blood or dark circles. In this process I also started designing the visual effects for some scenes (see Figures 7 & 8).

Figure 7. Make Up

Figure 8. VFX

Location scouting: this was one of the longest and most difficult steps. First I had to find the perfect places and visit them a couple of times with my AD and DOP. My scenes take place mainly inside a hospital, but I also have some scenes in a court room and ambulance. I had meetings with Becky Hilbert (Johnson City Community Relations Director), Judge Robert Cupp, and Dianne Cupp (Juvenile Court Director) in order to get their facilities as possible locations for the sitcom (see Figures 9 & 10). I also got agreements with the Johnson City Emergency Medical Services to use one of their ambulances, and from the Johnson City Community Clinic, Nursing Program, ETSU Student Health Clinic, and Office of ETSU President, Dr. Brian Noland, to film at their facilities.

Figures 9 and 10. Location Scouting

Casting Actors: in order to find my actors I did three casting calls, and had the help of Bobby Funk, ETSU Theater and Dance professor. In order to help the actors prepare for the audition and to find the place, I created a webpage where they could find all the information about the casting call and download from there a description of the character and a script (see Figures 11 & 12).

Figure 11. Casting Webpage

Figure 12. Casting Call

Shot by Shot story board and Film Schedule: I had several meetings with my director of photography and assistant director to break down the script and plan every single scene. We drew some story boards and cameras planning, covering all the scenes. The drawings were based on the definite locations and possible actors (see Figure 13). After having our film schedule and planning done, we met with the camera and sound crew and went through our drawings, explaining them the plan for every scene from the first day of shooting to the last.

Script read-through with cast: during the winter break I had meetings with my actors to prepare their characters and rehearse some scenes. It was important for me to work with those who were not professional actors so they could feel confident the day of the shooting.

Copyright and SAG-AFTRA Registration Process: the preproduction is the time to register the script under the copyright agency and start the registration of the project on the SAG-AFTRA (see Figures 14 & 15). For my project I worked with Patrick Cronin, a professional actor, and this process was required.

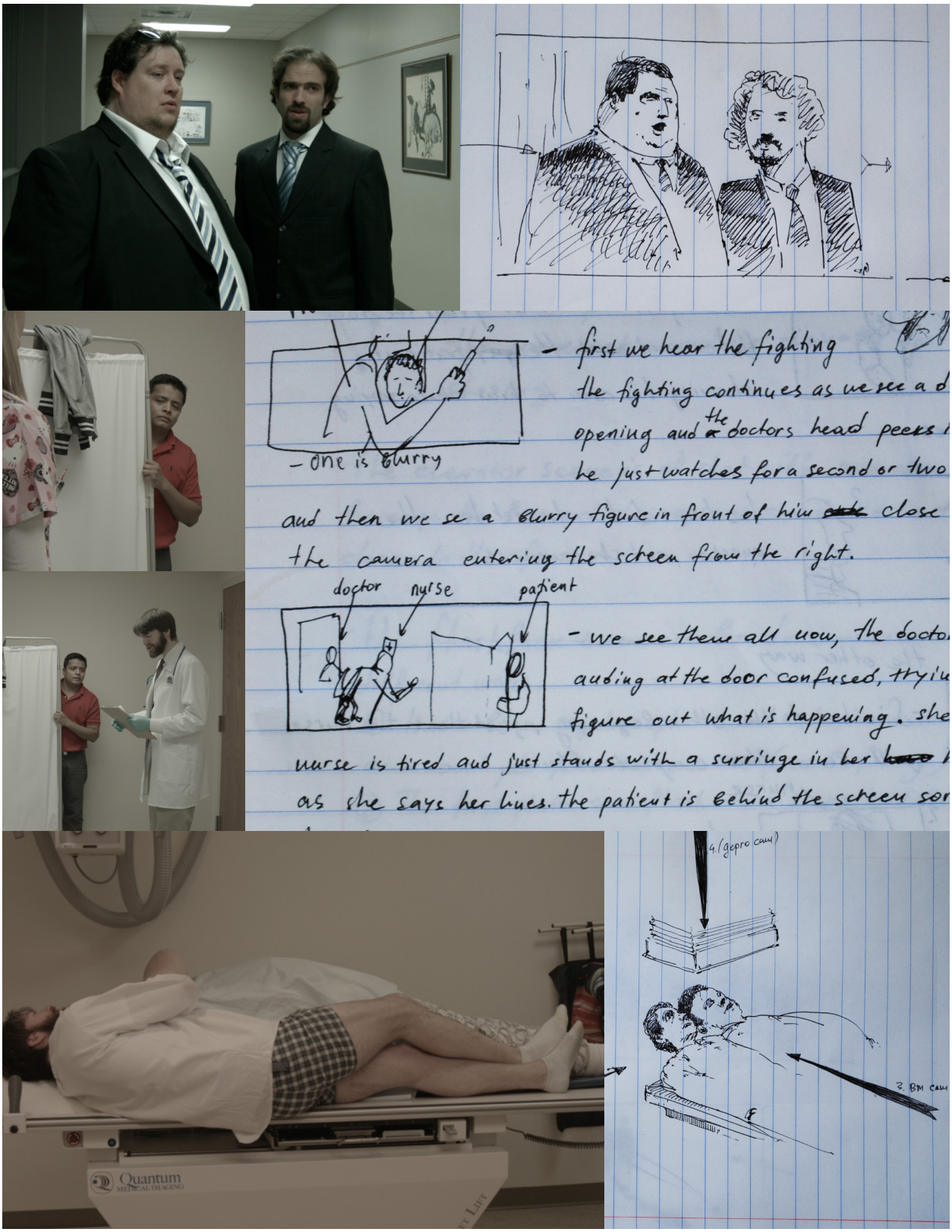


Figure 13. Storyboard

Copyright
United States Copyright Office

<< Back

Case Summary: Upload Deposit is not allowed.

Case #: 1-1094892921 Type of Case: Work of the Performing Arts Opened: 12/23/2013

Title: Not Dead At All: The Last Judgement Contact Name: Martin Becerra

Figure 14. Copyright Process

SAG-AFTRA ONE UNION

SCREEN ACTORS SCREEN ACTORS GUILD-AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TELEVISION AND RADIO ARTISTS
STUDENT FILM AGREEMENT

TITLE: Not Dead At All: The Last Judgement

FILMMAKER:

Producer (Student): Martin Becerra

SS #:

Address:

City: Johnson City

State: Tennessee Zip 37604

Phone:

Email:

BUDGET: Project financed by: Martin Becerra

Cash expenditures $

+

Crew deferrals $0

+

Equipment deferrals $0

Total Budget = $

PRODUCTION: Shooting Location: East Tennessee State University Main Campus

Total # shoot days 4 Dates: Start 02/01/2014 Finish 02/09/2014

Edited running time 23

# of Performers 6 Professional 1 Non – Professional 5

Initial reason for producing this film: It is my thesis project

Figure 15. SAG - AFTRA Registration Process

Sponsorship: during a filming day, working around 8 hours per day, it is fundamental to feed the crew. You need to set up breaks for the meals and respect their times. In productions like this, sometimes the expense for food is main cost of your production. I visited some of the restaurants around ETSU and had meetings with the marketing directors and managers of some of them. I got food sponsorship agreements with Domino's Pizza and El Charolais.

After completing all the steps of preproduction and having checked the technical workflow with Daniel Santiago, ETSU RTVF Engineer Chief, we were ready to face the next phase of the project, the production.

# CHAPTER 5

# PRODUCTION

The production phase refers to the period of time when the film is actually being shot. The production schedule was designed to shoot by location proximity. The movie has 13 scenes and it took us 4 days (as planned) to film everything. The time sheets were sent to the cast and crew every day and in these documents they could find a detailed explanation of the day, the timing, and the locations.

1ST Day of Shooting (02/01/14): Court House:During the first day we shot the scenes number 2,3, and 4. We started with the scene 4, and the location used was a meeting room at the president office. After doing this scene we moved to the CULP center where we had lunch and after that we shot the scenes number 2 and 3. Scene number 3 took a little more time due to the complexity of using a dolly (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. First Day of Shooting

2ND Day of Shooting (02/02/14): Psychiatrist: The second day was shorter but productive; we shot the scenes 5 and 9 that take place in the psychiatrist room. The location was in Burgin Dossett Hall, at the University Relations Office (see Figure 17). After the shooting, the camera crew got together to discuss the first weekend and to plan the rest of the scenes. The production team worked on the SAG-AFTRA paperwork (see Figures 18 &19).

Figure 17. Second Day of Shooting

| Executive Producer: Bardia Sareh<br>Producer: Breanna Lyda<br>Director: Martin Becerra<br>Production Manager:<br>Production Coordinator:<br>1st Assistant Director: Ryan Renfro | **Last Judgment** | DATE: 02/08/2014 |
|---|---|---|
| **WEATHER: Sat Feb 8**<br>49°<br>29°<br>Chance of rain:<br>20%<br>Wind:<br>WSW at 5 mph | **CALL TIME 08:00**<br>Check grid for individual call times | LUNCH<br>Tacos at 10:00! |

| Production Office | Nearest Hospital to Set |
|---|---|
| | 400 N State of Franklin Rd<br>Johnson City, TN<br>(423) 431-6111 |

LOCATIONS

| # | Location | Address | Parking | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Johnson City Community Health Center | 2151 Century Lane | Street Parking out front | (423) 926-2500 |
| 2 | ETSU Student Health Clinic | Roy S. Nicks Hall | Street Parking out front | |

| Scene and Description | Cast | Pgs | Loc |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10.Consultation (Music) | 1,2,3,4 | 19 | 1 |
| 12.X-Ray Room 2 | 1,5,6 | 21-22 | 1 |
| 1.Vaccination Room | 1,5,7 | 1-2 | 2 |
| 7.Consultation Room | 1,8 | 13-14 | 2 |
| | | TOTAL PAGES: 7 | |

| # | Cast | Role | Call Time | Pick Up Time | MU/WD | Set Call |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | JUSTIN AUBIN | Dr.Schmidt | 8:15 | | | 8:30 |
| 2. | BRAD BATT | 30 Year old Man | 8:15 | | | 8:30 |
| 3. | BRIT BATT | Kid | 8:15 | | | 8:30 |
| 4. | SHERIDAN BATT | Woman | 8:15 | | | 8:30 |
| 5. | GIOVANNA LIMA | Giovanna | 8:45 | | | 9:00 |

| Executive Producer: Bardia Sareh<br>Producer: Breanna Lyda<br>Director: Martin Becerra<br>Production Manager:<br>Production Coordinator:<br>1st Assistant Director: Ryan Renfro | **Last Judgment** | DATE: 02/09/2014 |
|---|---|---|
| **Weather : Sun Feb 9**<br>49°<br>29°<br>Partly Cloudy<br>Chance of rain:<br>20%<br>Wind:<br>SW at 9 mph | **CALL TIME 09:00**<br>Check grid for individual call times | LUNCH<br>11:30 a.m. |

| Production Office | Nearest Hospital to Set |
|---|---|
| | 400 N State of Franklin Rd<br>Johnson City, TN<br>(423) 431-6111 |

LOCATIONS

| # | Location | Address | Parking | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Washington County / Johnson City EMS | 296 Wesley Street | Street Parking out front | |
| 2 | ETSU College of Nursing | Roy S. Nicks Hall | Street Parking out front | |

| Scene and Description | Cast | Pgs | Loc |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Ambulance | 1,2,3 | 11-12 | 1 |
| 8. Hospital Room | 1,4,5 | 14-17 | 2 |
| 13. Final | 1,4,5,6 | 22-25 | 2 |
| | | Total Pages: 9 | |

| # | Cast | Role | Call Time | Pick Up Time | MU/WD | Set Call |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | CLAYTO VAN HUSS | Gus | 9:30 | | | 9:45 |
| 2. | LAUREN STEPHENS | Carrie | 9:30 | | | 9:45 |
| 3. | RYAN RENFRO | Paramedic | 9:00 | | | 9:45 |
| 4. | GIOVANNA LIMA | Giovanna | 12:30 | | | 12:45 |

Figures 18 and 19. Time Sheets

3rd Day of Shooting (08/02/14): Clinics: The third day was the most complicated one. Due to the timing provided by the clinics, we had only 5 hours to shoot 4 scenes (scenes 1, 7, 10, 12) in two different locations. In order to be able to do that we planned everything to the minutest detail. The day started early, at 8:00 am at the first location, the Johnson

City Community Clinic, where we did the scenes 10 and 12. At 10 we had a break to eat something and to move to the next location where we stayed until 1:30. There we shot there the scenes 1 and 7 (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Third Day of Shooting

4th Day of Shooting (09/02/14): Ambulance and Hospital: The last day was the longest one. We started at 9:00 am at the Johnson City Emergency Medical Services facilities where we filmed scene 6. For this scene we had to use a green screen to fake the movement of the ambulance. After this we moved to ETSU, where we had lunch and moved to the next location, the Student Health Clinic. In the clinic we shot the last three scenes (8,11,13). In scene 11 we used the breakaway prompts. Due to some technical problems with the cameras we needed an extra day to do some pick up takes (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. Forth Day of Shooting

# CHAPTER 5

# POSTPRODUCTION

Postproduction is the term used for the final stage in filmmaking in which the raw footage is edited together to form the completed film. The processes involved in postproduction include: picture editing, sound editing, color correction, visual effects, and music recording.

Editing: the software used for the editing was Final Cut Pro 7. After the editing was done, the sequences were exported to XML and OMF to do the color correction, sound editing, and visual effects (see Figure 22).

Figure 22. Final Cut Capture

Sound Editing: Pro Tools is the software used for this process. Once the sound editing is done, the sessions are exported as Quicktime files later to be mixed with the final editing. ETSU student Thomas De Mello was the sound director and producer (see Figures 23 & 24).

Color Correction: with the color correction we give the movie the look we wanted by applying filters and adjusting the levels. Two programs were used in this process, DaVinci and Apple Color. Once the color correction and grading was done, it was exported as an XML and send to Final Cut for the final editing and mixing (see Figure 25).

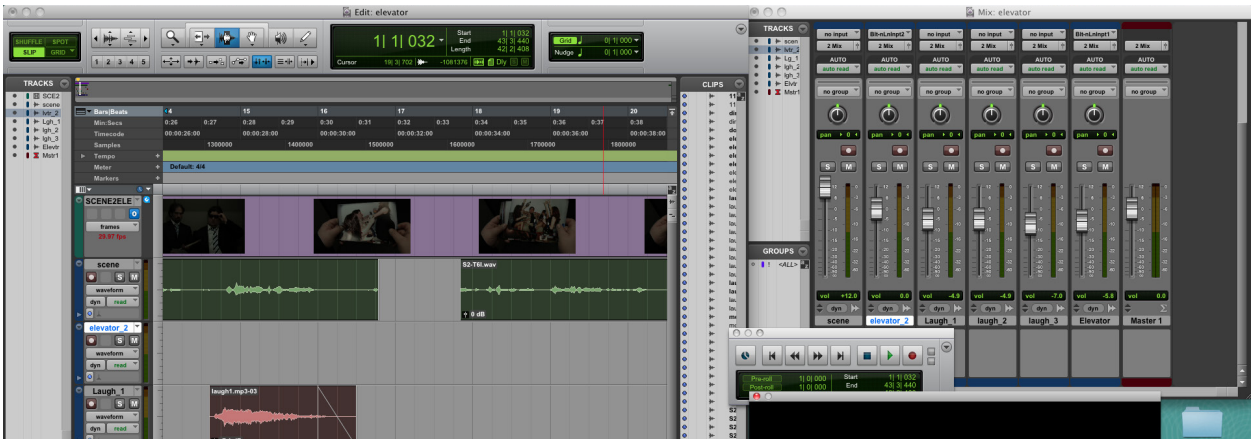


Figure 23. Pro Tools Capture

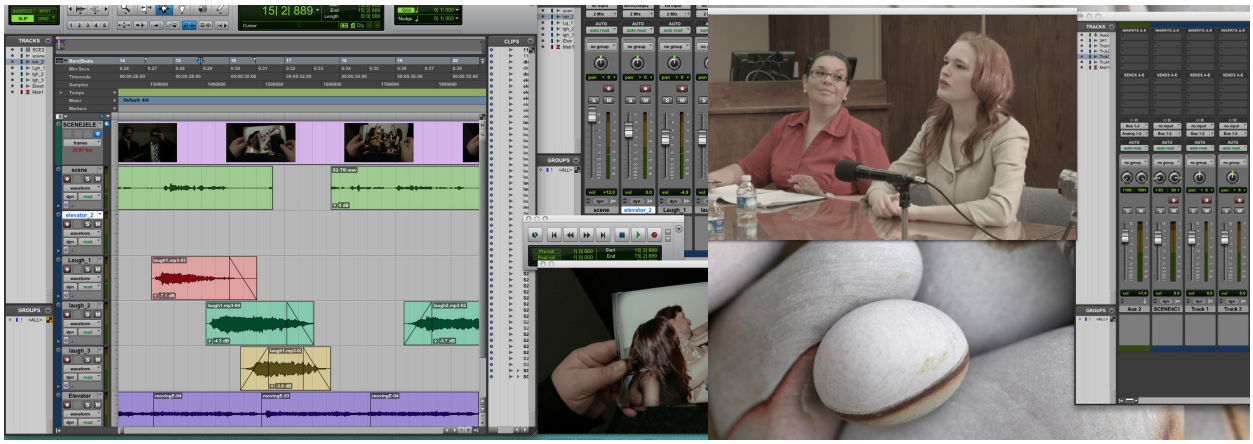

Figure 24. Pro Tools Capture 2

Figure 25. Color Grading

Compositing and Credits: some takes needed to be stabilized and I also needed to create Saint Martin Hospital. In order to do this I used some real footage and composed a new image using After Effects, this software uses a Layer based interface for compositing and visual effects. The opening credits were created as well with After Effects by Ben Ramirez, a Digital Media ETSU student (see Figure 26).

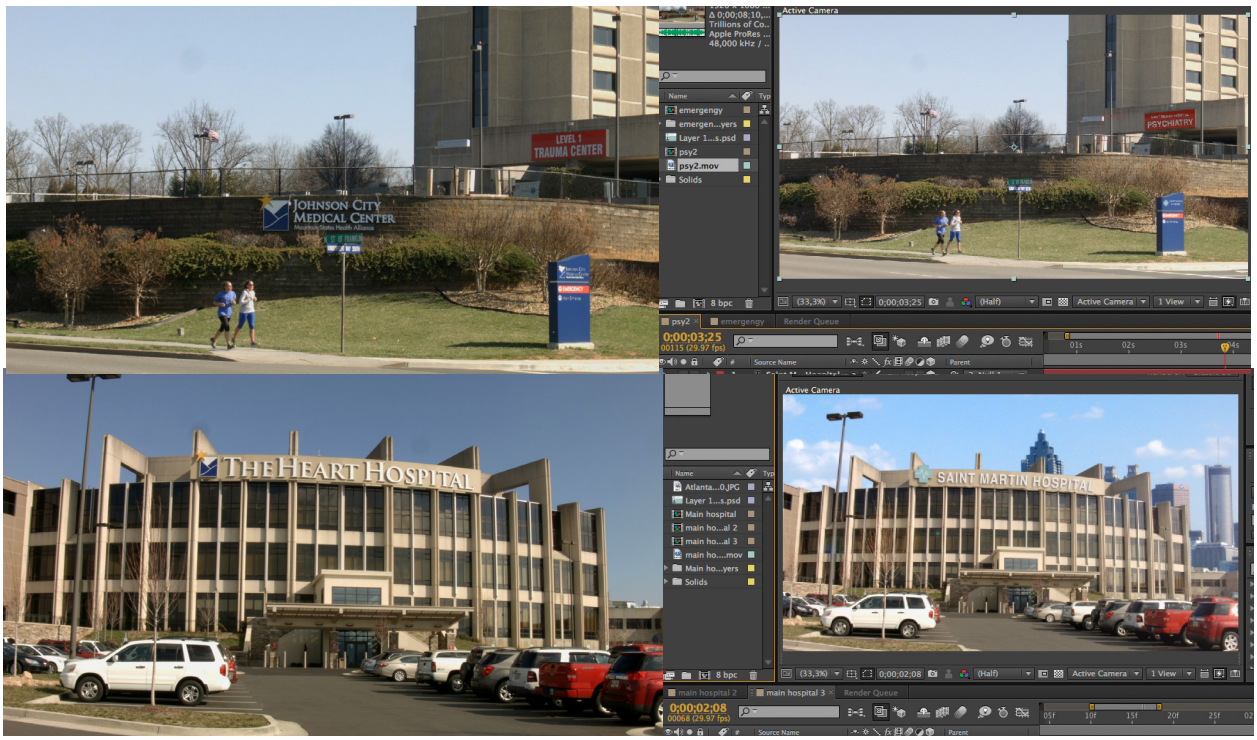


Figure 26. Compositing with After Effects

Music Recording: the last process of the project was to create an original song. The song was created for the opening and ending credits. The music was created in Iran and the vocals recorded at ETSU by Emad Motavassel. Justin Mullins was the recording engineer and Erfan Rezayatbakhsh composer of the music and lyrics. Both of them are ETSU students (see Figure 27).

Figure 27. Music Recording

# CHAPTER 7

# CONCLUSION

Francis Ford Coppola once said: “I wanted to be a film student again, as a man in my 60s. To go someplace alone and see what you can cook up, with no existent budgets”. When I came to ETSU and started my master’s program I was lost, I had some working experience and passion for so many things. During these 2 years here, I have not only learned about film, TV, and communication but also and more importantly, about myself. I learned to analyze myself, my strengths and weaknesses and to find a place where I can take advantage of my capabilities.

From the beginning of this project I had three main goals: to do an outstanding thesis project, to combine my passion (media production) with my studies, and to create a professional product--a show that I could try to sell to TV studios. I am very satisfied with the final outcome because Not Dead At All is not only a funny pilot episode, but an entire series, 22 episodes where you could see the arch of the story and the evolution of the characters. I have created a product that I will be confident to show and sell. I feel confident to sit down at a meeting with a producer and say: “This is what I do, if you want, we can work together and make this happen”.

There are two ways to sell an original TV series to a TV network or TV studio; first, by knowing someone inside a TV network and second, though a literacy agent. With Not Dead At All I will use both ways. I have access to the Univision’s Programming Vice President. The idea is to try to sell the format of the show with the actors I already used as first option in the cast. Not Dead At All mixes both Latinos and American characters, although Univision is starting to experiment with this type of format, most of their programming is pure Spanish, and in this case I will have to translate and adapt the rest of the season to Spanish, having to find new actors to play the characters. If Univision is not interested in buying the format, I will send the bible and pilot episode to different talent and literacy agencies trying to be represented by one of them.

Finally, if I can’t sell the series to any TV studio, the mere fact of creating and producing an original sitcom has helped me to reaffirm my idea of working in a place where I can use my creative and artistic skills and at the same time my productive and management side; that is why I think Not Dead At All has been the first step in my journey to become a successful show runner.

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